

## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Maria del Carmen Leija Briones Awarded \$15,000 Counseling Fellowship From NBCC and Affiliates**



Portland, OR—The NBCC Foundation, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), recently selected Maria del Carmen Leija Briones, of Portland, Oregon, for the NBCC Minority Fellowship Program-Addictions Counselors (MFP-AC). As an NBCC MFP-AC Fellow, Leija Briones will receive funding and training to support her education and facilitate her addictions counseling service to underserved minority populations.

The NBCC MFP-AC is made possible by a grant awarded to the NBCC Foundation in collaboration with the Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Foundation administers the MFP-AC, including training and collaboration activities, such as [webinars](#), that are open to all National Certified Counselors (NCCs). The goal of the program is to reduce health disparities and improve behavioral health care outcomes for racially and ethnically diverse populations by increasing the available number of culturally competent behavioral health professionals.

The NBCC Foundation MFP will distribute up to \$15,000 to Leija Briones and the other 39 master's-level addictions counseling students selected to receive the fellowship award. Leija Briones is a graduate of Portland State University, in Oregon, and is currently a master's student in the clinical mental health and addictions counseling program at Lewis & Clark College, in Portland, Oregon. Upon graduation, she intends to work with youth and families from underserved minority communities, especially with Latino youth and their families. She would like to focus on this population because she has become aware of the high need for bilingual/bicultural dual diagnosis services for this population. Leija Briones wants to help bridge the gap between dual diagnosis services and the Latino community. In addition, she wants to become an advocate for this population. As a Latina/Mexican, Leija Briones is aware of the lack of resources and lack of opportunities that underserved minority communities such as the Latino community experience. Earning this fellowship will allow Leija Briones to attend conferences where she can learn more about how to better help her future clients and give back to her community and other underserved minority communities. In addition, it will allow her to connect with other people of color who are in the counseling profession. Building these connections will allow Leija Briones to expand her knowledge and find support in her professional development.

The NBCC Foundation has also awarded 20 \$20,000 [doctoral fellowships](#) through the Minority Fellowship Program and 30 \$10,000 [master's-level fellowships](#) through the MFP-Mental Health Counseling-Master's (MFP-MHC-M). The Foundation plans to open the next NBCC MFP-AC application period in fall 2019. To learn more about the NBCC MFP and its fellows, please visit <http://www.nbccf.org/Programs/Fellows>.

#### ABOUT THE NBCC FOUNDATION

The NBCC Foundation is the nonprofit affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), based in Greensboro, North Carolina. NBCC is the nation's premier professional certification board devoted to credentialing counselors who meet standards for the general and specialty practices of professional counseling. Currently, there are

more than 65,000 board certified counselors in the United States and more than 50 countries. The Foundation's mission is to leverage the power of counseling by strategically focusing resources for positive change.

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